

# THE Pulse

KOSSUTH REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER - SPRING 2008

## Getting a leg up on the competition



Participants in the Physical Therapy Department's "Bee's Knees" contest in Feb. See the story and more pictures on page 6.

## KRHC HOSTS HEALTHY FOOD FAIR

Approximately 75 people turned out for Kossuth Regional Health Center's healthy foods fair on Saturday, March 1. The first-time event hosted a variety of speakers on different food-related topics, eye tests for children provided by the Algona Lion's Club and information displays.

Special thanks to all presenters: family physician Dr. Jeff Doolittle, dietitian Deb Studer, diabetic educator Sheila Ingalls, Nancy Clark of Kossuth County Extension, Alison Hill of the Daily Bread Bakery, chef-in-training Elizabeth Hill, and gluten-free "veterans" Lisa Louscher and Laurie Hammer. The "Going Gluten-Free" session was a highlight of the fair, attracting more than 35 people. Participants shared ideas, recipes and insight into eating a wheat-free diet,



Registered dietitian Deb Studer speaks with a group at the KRHC Healthy Food Fair.

often as a result of having celiac disease. People also enjoyed a variety of product samples, including take home bread mixes donated by the Chebe Bread Company. See page 4 for a gluten-free cookie recipe.

## Dr. Ahari keeps busy in Kossuth Regional OR

Dr. Abdi Ahari began providing surgical coverage at Kossuth Regional Health Center in January and has kept a busy schedule in the operating room ever since.

Dr. Ahari is a certified general surgeon by the American Board of Surgery and received his training at Uppsala University School of Medicine. He served his residency at the University of Iowa College of Medicine and also performed an internship at Sala General Hospital.

"This is a great opportunity for KRHC to partner with the Mason City Clinic in order to provide surgical coverage for our patients," said hospital administrator Scott Curtis.



General surgeon at KRHC, Dr. Abdi Ahari

"We've had a great response to Dr. Ahari. With his help in place we can offer surgical services without disruption while we continue to recruit a general surgeon that would be with us on a full-time basis."

KRHC partners with a variety of visiting specialists that also utilize the KRHC operating rooms, as well as KRHC's own Dr. Ron Moeller, for gynecologic surgery. Dr. Ahari is currently available at Kossuth Regional Health Center on Mondays and Fridays. For more information about surgical services at KRHC please call 515-295-2451.



The KRHC surgical staff, busy at work in the photo above, welcomed Dr. Ahari to the operating room in early January.

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## FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Healthcare was the topic of the day during our annual Iowa Hospital Association Legislative Day trip to Des Moines on February 27. Kossuth Regional Health Center took 40 people down to the Capitol to advocate for important health care issues with our legislators.

Health care is on the minds of Iowans and not just the people living in Kossuth County. Polls have shown it is the number-one domestic issue in both the state and the nation. Health care is also on the minds of Iowa legislators and the governor, and the atmosphere at the Statehouse is charged with talk of statewide reforms.

A high-quality health care system and a well-insured population put Iowa in a position of strength as it examines possible changes in health care. With that in mind, the Iowa Hospital Association and Kossuth Regional Health Center put forth a list of recommendations aimed at reforming and strengthening health care in Iowa:

**Invest in Medicaid:** This includes maximizing beneficiary eligibility and provider payments. A fully funded Medicaid program must address the massive losses – more than \$147 million each year – that Iowa's hospitals are forced to absorb. While this is not an inexpensive proposition, Medicaid investments are matched nearly 2-to-1 by the federal government, making this a more cost-effective strategy than creating new programs financed solely by state dollars.

**Enroll all eligible children in HAWK-I and Medicaid.** Additional outreach efforts for these programs could raise the number of insured children in Iowa to virtually 100 percent.

**Expand family insurance coverage to include young adults to age 25.** This not only affects young adults who have insurance options but who choose not to accept coverage, but positively impacts Iowa's Medicaid program as well. Approximately 40 percent of all Iowa births are now Medicaid-eligible. Expanding family



Hospital administrator Scott Curtis, right, shows students on the Legislative Day trip how to summon Rep. Delores Mertz from her chambers.



Top left: Scott Curtis and Legislative Day attendees talk with Rep. Delores Mertz about important health care issues. Top right: Senator Jack Kibbie talks about the proposed tobacco bill with Legislative Day participants. Bottom: The entire group from KRHC's Legislative Day visit to Des Moines poses with Rep. Delores Mertz and Rep. Marcie Frevert inside the Capitol.

coverage would keep many of those mothers off the state's Medicaid rolls.

**Apply mandates for insurance coverage only toward those who have the means to pay.** Instead of a costly and administratively burdensome new system trying to achieve universal coverage, any individual mandates to buy health insurance should be directed only toward those Iowans with sufficient incomes to pay. Building upon Medicaid, expanding family insurance coverage, and aiming any insurance mandates only upon those who can afford it would address Iowa's uninsured population from three meaningful angles, while allowing the state to better manage its budget.

**Develop a Medicaid payment system that rewards value.** The experience of other states demonstrates that a punitive pay-for-performance system does not work, especially in a state like Iowa where most providers are already at the high end of quality rankings. But recognizing value through payment incentives can have a system-wide impact on a collaborative health care system such as the one we enjoy in our state.

**Support provider-led pilot projects that demonstrate savings.** Providers already are developing chronic disease management programs and other cost-saving initiatives. However, most insurers, including Medicaid, do not reimburse for such services.

The state should create financial incentives for providers who demonstrate health care savings to recoup a portion of those savings.

**Focus on mental health services.** A shortage of psychiatrists is hampering the ability to provide hospital inpatient behavioral health services. In addition, Iowa's behavioral health care providers currently have to contend with 99 different sets of benefits and payment structures from 99 different counties. Iowa should establish a core set of behavioral health services that all counties must adhere to in order to provide equity across the state.

Thank you, again, to all the community members who took a day to advocate for these issues as part of the IHA Legislative Day. Our leaders at the Capitol now have the opportunity to make some positive changes for Iowa. Health care in Iowa is already among the best. Together, we can do even better.

Scott Curtis, CEO/Administrator  
Kossuth Regional Health Center

## HELP FOR SENIORS IN THEIR HOMES

Seniors in the area have immediate access to help, thanks to the Kossuth Regional Health Center's Lifeline Program.

Lifeline is a personal response service that gives seniors immediate access to help whenever they need it. By simply pressing the Personal Help Button, worn around the neck or wrist, a Lifeline subscriber is instantly connected to a professional monitor who will assess the caller's need and respond appropriately, whether it's calling a loved one, neighbor or emergency services.

Kossuth Regional Health Center has offered the Lifeline service to numerous people in this community.

"It gives me security when I am by myself," said one subscriber about Lifeline. "I

know if I press the button someone will answer me. One time I fell when I was alone and Lifeline contacted my family. They came to help me immediately. Not only do I feel secure, but it also gives my family peace of mind."

Lifeline helps bolster the confidence of seniors to live independently in their own homes. The added benefit of this service is that it gives family members and caregivers peace of mind, knowing that help is there even when they are not.

For just the cost of a cup of coffee a day, the Lifeline service can be installed within 24 hours for a nominal installation fee. To learn more about Lifeline, contact Kossuth Regional Health Center at 515-295-4430.

## Dine With Flair



Plans are underway for the Kossuth Regional Health Center Auxiliary's fourth annual Dine With Flair fundraiser planned for Saturday, April 5 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church.

The table hostesses volunteer to decorate a table for eight with their chosen theme and sell eight tickets for guests to be seated at their table. This year the luncheon will be catered by Vickie Gangestad and served by members of the Auxiliary.

"We have many of the table spoken for, but we're still looking for a few more hostesses," said Dine With Flair coordinator Midge Herbst. "It's always fun to see the different themes that people come up with for their tables."

In addition to the chance to view nearly 20 themed tables and enjoy a delicious lunch with friends, a short program follows the luncheon. There are still a few tables available. If you or your organization would like to decorate a table or would more information, please contact Midge Herbst, Dine With Flair chairman at 515-295-2556

## TAKE OUR LIFELINE QUIZ!

1. What is Lifeline?
2. How long has KRHC offered the Lifeline service?
3. How many individuals does KRHC currently serve through Lifeline?
4. Who runs the Lifeline program at KRHC?
5. How much does Lifeline cost through KRHC?
6. Is Lifeline covered by Medicaid, Medicare or private insurance?
7. Can family members be notified in case of a real emergency?
8. Can the Personal Help button be worn in the shower?
9. Where do the calls for help get routed?
10. Can the patient answer the phone with the button?

**Test your Lifeline knowledge with this short quiz. (Answers below.)**

*1. Lifeline is an easy-to-use personal response service that ensures that older adults living at home get quick assistance whenever it is needed - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. 2. 1985 3. 175 4. KRHC Community Health 5. Installation \$35 and \$30 a month subscribers fee. 6. Elderly Waiver 7. Yes 8. Yes 9. The answering service is located in Boston. The operator always acknowledges Kossuth Regional Health Center, Algona. 10. Yes*

### Award winning exhibit by Abby Hanna



Abby Hanna, daughter of Chris and Cyndi Hanna, won the award from Kossuth Regional Health Center for the best health-related project entitled "Believe It Or Not 99.99%" at Seton Grade School's annual education fair. Abby's project focused on which hand sanitizer got rid of the most germs and the effectiveness of soap versus hand sanitizer. Congratulations, Abby, on your winning project!

### FIRST BABY OF 2008



Kossuth Regional Health Center welcomed its first baby of the year on January 3, 2008. Dionmykel William Bradshaw was born on at 4:59 p.m. with Dr. Michael Lampe delivering. His parents are Tara Smith and Dionte Bradshaw of Minneapolis. Grandparents are Jacquelyn Cunningham of Algona and Youlanda Bradshaw of Minneapolis. Dionmykel joins two siblings, Kiana Bradshaw and Cody King.